down to 21.59% in 2001 from 24.85% in 1991, is expected to narrow down further by the end of the Tenth Plan. The total literacy rate has also improved significantly from 52.21% in 1991 to 64.84% in 2001 and it is expected to achieve the Tenth Plan target of literacy rate of 75% by 2007. The Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) has also been on the decline i.e. from 72 per 1000 births in 1998 to 60 in 2003 and is expected to decline further.

Bharat Nirman Programme

1842. SHRI R.P. GOENKA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a proposal has been formulated to create a "specific financing window" for the Rs. 1.74 lakh crore Bharat Nirman Programme through the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development;

(b) if so, the details thereof and its present status;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the model of delivery involves the Panchayats and the private sector as partners to speed up implementation of the programme for enhancement and management of the rural infrastructure; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN): (a) and (b) No Sir. In his budget speech for 2006-07, the Finance Minister has proposed opening of a separate window under Rural Infrastructure Development Fund XII for rural roads with a corpus of Rs. 4000 cr. during 2006-07.

(c) and (d) While the private sector is not expected to participate significantly in Bharat Nirman, involvement of Panchayats is central to the programme. The Panchayat's involvement will be in areas like identification of beneficiaries, maintenance & operation of assets and in certain cases the implementation also.